3 JUNE
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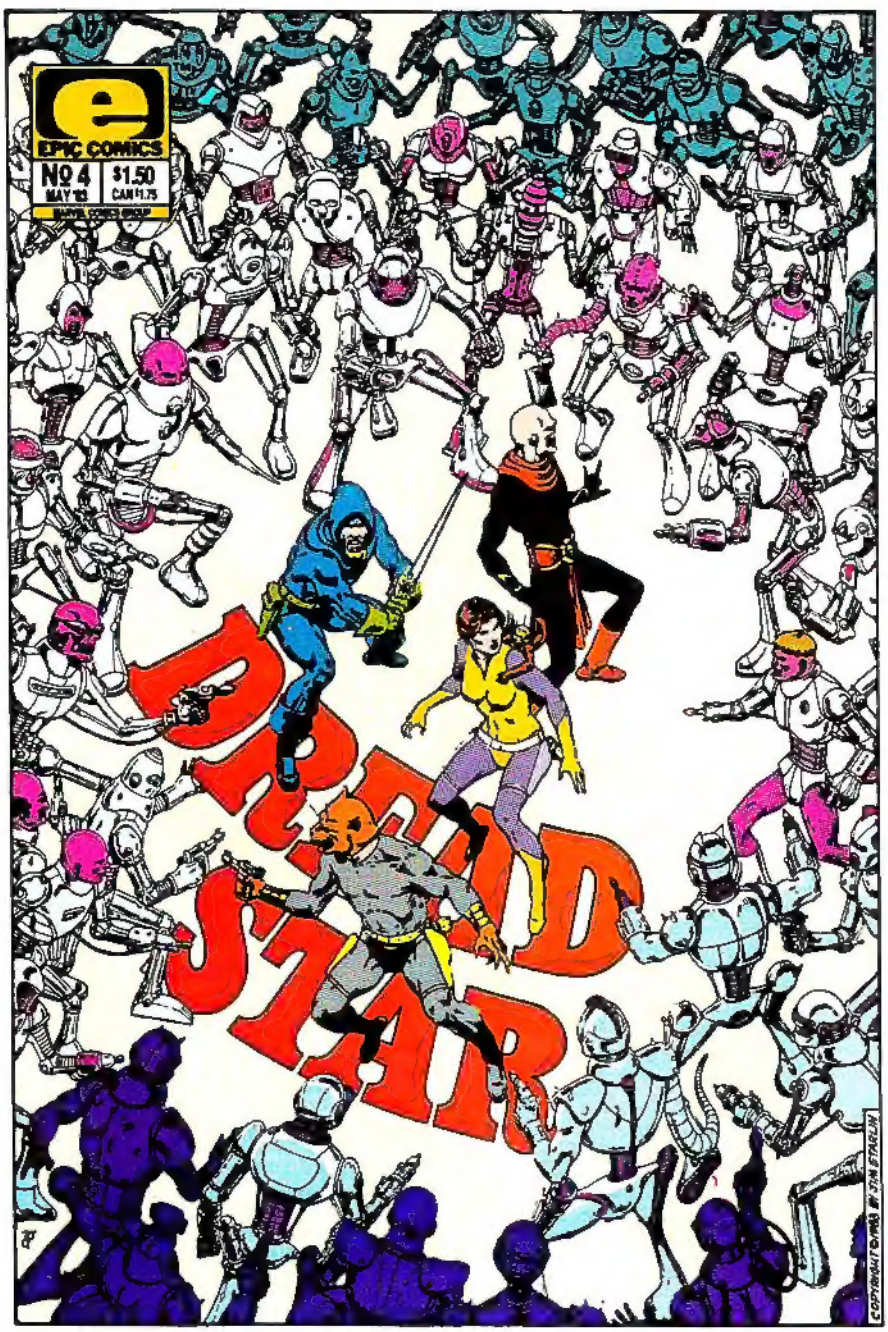
ONLY 25¢
MEMO: SEE NEXT MESSAGE...
EATS QUICHE!
BUTCH- You never leave your studio anymore. Aren't you hungry when you go out?
LOVE, MOM
E.T.-- PHONE HOME
In This Issue:
BUTCH GUICE Sizes Up the MICRONAUTS
MARVEL AGE
25

NEW FROM EPIC™ COMICS

DREADSTAR™ NO. 4 By JIM STARLIN



AS THE CLOCK TICKS...

VANTH DREADSTAR MUST PREVENT THE ASSASSINATION OF ONE OF THE TWO MOST POWERFUL MEN IN THE IMPERIAL GALAXY.

THE NEWEST CHAPTER OF THE DREADSTAR™ SAGA WILL BE ON SALE IN APRIL!

MARVEL AGE

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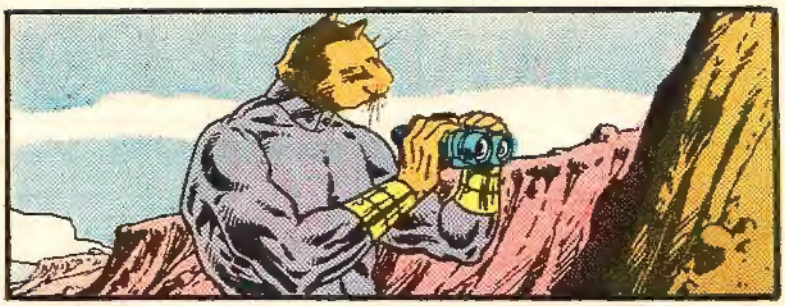

COMING ATTRACTIONS
An advance look at the Marvel Comics you'll see in May 2

NEWSWATCH
Inside info on recent happenings here at Marvel 6

AN INTERVIEW WITH BUTCH GUICE by Patrick Daniel O'Neill
An inside look at the artist behind the Micronauts 7

STORIES I'D RATHER NOT WRITE by Roger Stern
Roger Stern, writer of the Avengers, Dr. Strange and Amazing Spiderman, talks about stories you'll never see 10

COYOTE AND DREADSTAR by Peter Sanderson
How the EPIC Comic line got its start, and a look at the future of EPIC Comics 13

MARVEL AGE™ Vol. 1, No. 3, June, 1983. Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President, Stan Lee, Publisher, Michael Hobson, Vice-President-Publishing, Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Published monthly. Copyright © 1983 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price 25¢ per copy in the U.S. and Canada. Subscription rate $4.00 for 12 issues. Canada and Foreign, $6.00. Printed in the U.S.A. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. MARVEL AGE (including all prominent characters featured in the issue), and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of and have been copyrighted by, the MARVEL COMICS GROUP. COYOTE © 1983 by Steve Englehart and Steve Leialoha. DREADSTAR © 1983 by Jim Starlin. Postmaster: Send address changes to Subscription Dept., Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.

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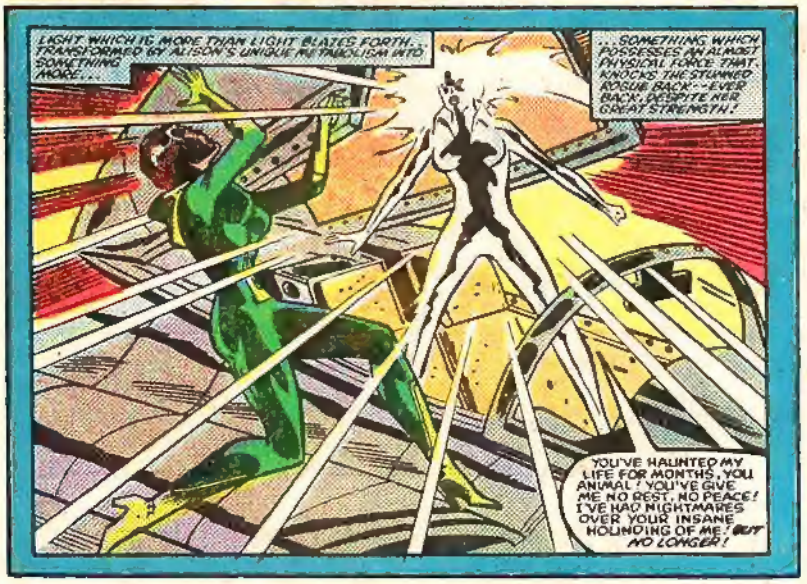

LIGHT WHICH IS MORE THAN LIGHT BLAZES FORTH... TRANSFORMED BY ALISON'S UNIQUE METABOLISM INTO SOMETHING MORE...
...SOMETHING WHICH POSSESSES AN ALMOST PHYSICAL FORCE THAT KNOCKS THE STUNNED ROGUE BACK--EVEN BACK, DESPITE HER GREAT STRENGTH!
YOU'VE HAUNTED MY LIFE FOR MONTHS, YOU ANIMAL! YOU'VE GIVE ME NO REST, NO PEACE! I'VE HAD NIGHTMARES OVER YOUR INSANE HOUNDING OF ME! BUT NO LONGER!

The following comics have September cover dates:

Shipping May 3, 1983; on sale May 24, 1983:

THE THING #3—Written by JOHN BYRNE. Pencils by RON WILSON. **Quicksilver,** chagrined over fathering a mere human child, goes to incredible lengths to rectify the situation, incurring the wrath of his Inhuman wife, **Crystal.**

KING CONAN #18—Written by ALAN ZELENETZ. Pencils and inks by RUDY NEBRES. In the midst of a costumed celebration for the god **Mitra, King Conan** finds himself battling the cannibalistic **Ibo Mala** in "The Devil of Darfar."

DAZZLER #28—Written and pencilled by FRANK SPRINGER. Inks by VINCE COLLETTA. Los Angeles becomes the scene of mutant mayhem as an embattled **Dazzler** has her final showdown with her nemesis, **Rogue.**

DAREDEVIL #198—Written by DENNY O'NEIL. Pencils by KLAUS JANSON. **Daredevil's** pursuit of the missing **Bullseye** takes him out of the country and into...what?

NEW MUTANTS #7—Written by CHRIS CLAREMONT. Pencils by JOHN BUSCEMA. The **New Mutants** thought they were embarking on a leisurely vacation up the Amazon with **Sunspot's** explorer mother, and instead discover the grandeur that was (and *is*) **Rome.**

Shipping May 10, 1983; on sale May 31, 1983:

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #244—ROGER STERN (writer) and JOHN ROMITA, JR. (penciler *and* inker for the first time) put **Peter Parker** through an "Ordeal" as, his life totally thrown for a loop, the **Webslinger** searches for clues to the identity of the **Hobgoblin.**

CAPTAIN AMERICA #285—Written by J.M. DeMATTEIS. Pencils by SAL BUSCEMA. One of **Cap's** sharpest opponents, the **Porcupine,** returns, and we also learn the outcome of the **Patriot's** losing battle with cancer.

THOR #335—Written by ALAN ZELENETZ. Pencils by MARK BRIGHT. Inks by VINCE COLLETTA. The quest for the Rune Staff of **Kamo Tharn** concludes, but what then will be the fate of Jane Foster (imprisoned within the body of **Sif** exactly 100 issues ago)? Find out this issue!

MOON KNIGHT #33—Written by DOUG MOENCH. Pencils by KEVIN NOWLAN. At long last—meet **Druid Walsh,** a bizarre street legend who, along with **Moon Knight,** becomes a subject for reporter **Joy Mercado** as she sets about "Exploding Myths."

INDIANA JONES #9—Written by DAVID MICHELINIE. Pencils by KERRY GAMMILL. Inks by SAM De La ROSA. Tired of lost cities, **Indy** and **Marion** decide to get away from it all into some exotic locale—a locale which abruptly becomes less exotic and very deadly.

CRYSTAR #3—Written by JO DUFFY. Pencils and inks by BRET BLEVINS. A magical mistake lands **Crystar, Ika** and the others in the Greenwich Village home of **Dr. Strange.** And as **Doc** and the befuddled **Ogeode** try to figure out how to send them back, the forces of **Moltar** lurk somewhere in the corridors of the house, determined to make sure that the Crystal people never reach home ...alive.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

HAWKEYE #1 (Limited Series)—Written and pencilled by MARK GRUENWALD. The first on-target issue of the **Avenging Arrow-slinger's** four-issue series witnesses **Hawkeye's** decision to "Listen to the Mockingbird" as, after a knock-down slugfest with the aforementioned **Mockingbird,** that lady tells him the real secret behind his employer, **Cross Technology.**

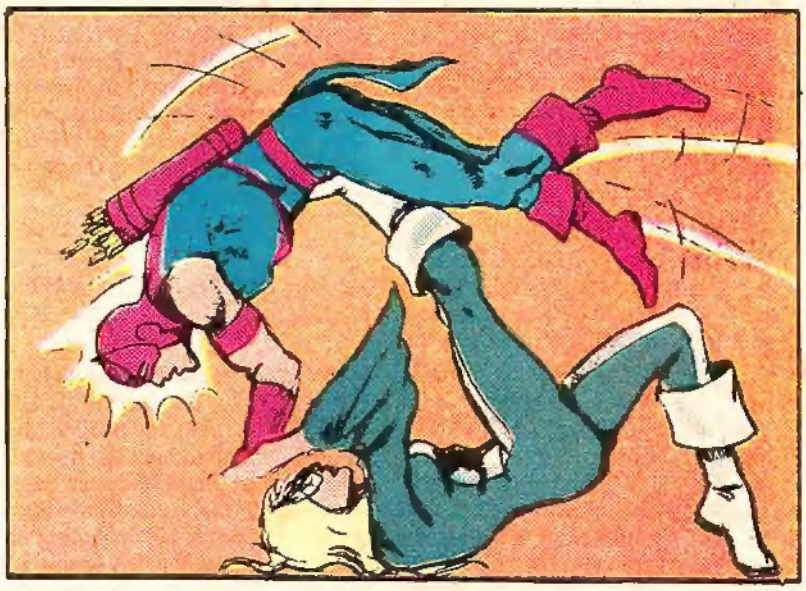
RETURN OF THE JEDI #1 (Limited Series)—Written by ARCHIE GOODWIN. Art by AL WILLIAMSON and CARLOS GARZON. The most eagerly-awaited sequel in motion picture history is here, as **Luke** and Co. go running to the aid of their long-lost friend **Han Solo.**

KULL THE CONQUEROR #3(Limited Series) — Written by ALAN ZELENETZ. Pencils by JOHN BUSCEMA. As a war brews in the background, **Kull** finds an old partner in slavery, frees him, and together they go in search of the pirate who sold the two of them into bondage.

FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #17—Written and pencilled by JOHN BYRNE. Way back in **Fantastic Four #2,** the **FF** left a pack of **Skrulls** transformed into cows grazing on a field. The **Skrulls** are long gone, but the field, and the town nearby, remain, the site of a bizarre series of goings on for which the **FF** must find a reason.

U.S. 1 #5—Written by AL MILGROM. Pencils by HERB TRIMPE. It's time for U.S. to stock up on Reese's Pieces as he has a close encounter with some rather unusual aliens. Ouch.

MICRONAUTS #54 — Written by BILL MANTLO. Pencils and inks by BUTCH GUICE. Listen up, ya mugs, 'cause what we got here is a rap of "Murder One," as da **Micronauts Mob** plans a bustout from da gangster-run Prison Planet, only to run into major muscle—**Tribunal** da three-headed robot. Miss it and get... real unhealthy.



Shipping May 17, 1983; on sale June 7, 1983:

INCREDIBLE HULK #287—Written by BILL MANTLO. Pencils by SAL BUSCEMA. Finding himself at "Loose Ends" after his encounter the previous issue with the **Soldier, Bruce Banner** tries to return to the relative quiet of his research, unaware that one of his strongest foes (possibly *the* strongest) is lurking in the background.

MARVEL TALES #155—From Spider-Man #17, **Spidey** is threatened by "The Return of the Green Goblin," as only STAN LEE and STEVE DITKO could do it.

AVENGERS #235—Written by ROGER STERN. Pencils by AL MILGROM. Inks by JOE SINNOTT. Beginning an **Avengers** multipart epic that is heralded by the arrival of one of the **FF's** oldest and deadliest foes, the wingless **Wizard.**

CONAN THE BARBARIAN #150—Written by MICHAEL FLEISHER. Pencils by JOHN BUSCEMA. Inks by ERNIE CHAN. **Conan** meets a mysterious female, being pursued by mysterious people for some mysterious reason—possibly the girl's mysterious power. Buy it and be enlightened.

MARVEL COMICS

Shipping May 17, 1983; on sale June 7, 1983:

X-MEN #173—Written by CHRIS CLAREMONT. Pencils by PAUL SMITH. Inks by BOB WIACEK. It's the social event of the season as **Viper, Silver Samurai** and **Captain America** are just a few of the guests at **Wolverine's** wedding!

POWER MAN/IRON FIST #97—Written by KURT BUSIEK. Pencils by WILLIAM JOHNSON. **Luke** decides to move out of Times Square, and in the meantime **Iron Fist** is threatened by a woman who can only come from fabled **K'un Lun!**

G.I. JOE #15—Written by LARRY HAMA. Pencils by MIKE VOSBURG. Inks by JON D'AGOSTINO. To escape imprisonment, **Snake Eyes** and his uneasy allies, **Dr. Venom** and **Quinn,** steal a plane and take off in a wild aerial getaway.

ROM #46—Written by BILL MANTLO. Pencils by SAL BUSCEMA. Inks by IAN AKIN & BRIAN GARVEY. Earth may become a "Bestiary," unless **Rom** and the **Soviet Super Soldiers** can defeat the **Wraith** witches who intend to release behemoths from the past on our unsuspecting planet.

Shipping May 24, 1983; on sale June 14, 1983:

IRON MAN #174—Written by DENNY O'NEIL. Pencils by LUKE McDONNELL. Inks by STEVE MITCHELL. It had to happen. It was inevitable. And yet, nobody can be truly prepared for it as **Tony Stark,** driven to the edge by alcoholism and the loss of his company, finally hits bottom.

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. IF YOU COULD BE INSIDE MY SKIN... IF YOU COULD FEEL WHAT I'M FEELING, YOU'D KNOW...
...YOU'D KNOW. THAT I'VE GOT TO DRINK...
...I'VE GOT TO...

MARVEL TEAM-UP #133—Written by J.M. DeMATTEIS. Pencils by SAL BUSCEMA. Inks by MIKE ESPOSITO. **Spidey** teams up with the **Fantastic Four** as they go toe-to-toe with the villainous **Dr. Faustus.**

FANTASTIC FOUR #258—Written and drawn by JOHN BYRNE. It's the best issue that the **FF** *never* appeared in. That's right, our heroes are not in "Interlude" at all as our scene shifts to Latveria where **Dr. Doom** plans to regain the power cosmic he once stole from the **Silver Surfer** and use it to resurrect... **Terrax the Untamed.**

PETER PARKER #82—Written by BILL MANTLO. Pencils by AL MILGROM. The **Punisher** and **Cloak and Dagger** battle it out, and the survivor must then battle the **Kingpin** to a brutal conclusion.

DEFENDERS #123—Written by J.M. DeMATTEIS. Pencils by DON PERLIN. **Doctor Strange,** the **Silver Surfer,** and the **Submariner** are trapped in time and must relive the most traumatic points in their lives—and this time they might not survive.

STAR WARS #75—Written by JO DUFFY. Pencils by RON FRENZ. Inks by TOM PALMER. The search for Han Solo is cut short as the rebels find themselves facing death on a planet of Water Breathers.

MARVEL UNIVERSE HANDBOOK #9—From **Quasar** (pencilled by MIKE GRELL) through the **SHE-HULK,** with BRENT ANDERSON's **Shanna** along the way.

ALPHA FLIGHT #2—A JOHN BYRNE production, in which we get to learn more of the background of **Marrina** (and it's weird—how many superheroines have been *hatched?).* Plus, beginning a regular five page backup feature revealing the full origins of **Alpha Flight.**

COMING ATTRACTIONS

FROM THE EPIC LINE:

EPIC ILLUSTRATED #19—(Shipping 5/17, on sale 6/7, August cover date) A JIM STERANKO cover is just for openers as this issue features more chapters of "Generation Zero" by ARCHIE GOODWIN and PEPE MORENO; a new series by JON JAY SMITH entitled "Mythology of the Abandoned City"; LEWIS CARROLL's "Jabberwocky" with illustrations by WADE HAMPTON; and "The Yellow Hat," a never-before-seen series of strips by the late comic strip genius VAUGHN BODE, aided and abetted by son MARK BODE.

DREADSTAR #5—(Shipping 5/24, on sale 6/14, July cover date) **Oedi** and **Skeevo** must rescue **Syzygy** from a fate worse than death. But what could be worse than that? The answer awaits within.

MARVEL BOOKS:

MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL #8—DAZZLER: THE MOVIE! (Shipping 5/24). Written by JIM SHOOTER. Pencils by FRANK SPRINGER. Winging her way out to Hollywood to make her first film, **Dazzler's** life seems to be on the upswing. But then her greatest nightmare comes true, turning her very existence into a hellish fight for survival as the world learns that **Dazzler** is a mutant. With bigots and mutant haters hounding her, with her powers undergoing a surprising metamorphosis, **Dazzler** seeks aid from the one person who might be able to help her—**Storm** of the **X-Men.** Not to be missed.

MARVEL COMING RETRACTIONS:

AVENGERS #233, previously announced as being penciled by Al Milgrom, will in fact be penciled by John Byrne.

X-MEN #171 will be penciled by Walt Simonson so that regular penciler Paul Smith will have time to get caught up.

MARVEL MAGAZINES:

BLIP #6—(Shipping 5/24, on sale 6/14, cover dated July) More Blip Tips and previews of video games to come.

SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #91—(Shipping 5/10, on sale 5/31, cover date August) Written by MICHAEL FLEISHER. Pencils by JOHN BUSCEMA. In "Forest of Fiends," **Conan** finds himself caught in a viper's nest of human vipers as he struggles in a power tug-of-war between a warring King and Queen.

OCTOPUSSY—MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL #27—(Shipping 5/10, on sale 5/31) An American import of the adaptation, by our British counterparts at Marvel London, of Roger Moore's latest and greatest James Bond adventure.

MARVEL AGE #6—(Shipping 5/17, on sale 6/7) What exactly goes into making a cover for a Marvel comic? We'll show you covers by FRANK MILLER, PAUL SMITH, and GIL KANE that have never seen print before, and explain where they've been all this time.

MARVEL FANFARE #10—(Shipping 5/17, on sale 6/7) Beginning a four-part Black Widow epic written by RALPH MACCHIO and pencilled by GEORGE PEREZ. In this opener, entitled "Widow," **Natasha** links up with **Shield** once again to go in search of her lost companion, **Ivan.** Additional pencils by BOB LAYTON and LUKE McDONNELL, with inks by BRETT BREEDING.

While we never knowingly print inaccurate information in these pages, Marvel Comics reserves the right to make any changes which may become necessary. We're sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

—The Bullpen.

REMINDER TO RETAIL STORE OWNERS:

You still have time to have your store listed in almost every Marvel Comic for $250 for a two month placement. Just fill out the coupon, include your check (made out to Kalish, Quigley & Rosen), and send to:

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Important Notice: The next closing date for this offer is March 1. Get your listing in while there's still room. If you have a catalogue, we will mention it at no extra cost.

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NEWSWATCH

Late December saw the annual freelancer's party here at the Marvel offices. While gifts ranging from chocolate Santas to gumball machines were exchanged, freelancers and staffers alike were serenaded by the dulcet tones of **Conan** editor LARRY -- HAMA and his group, who go by the name of the Burning Sensations. With a sound uniquely its own (much as Krakatoa had a sound all *its* own), the group (depicted here by BOB CAMP) was the hit of the party.

With the wedding of **Logan** and **Mariko** slated for **X-MEN #173**, this is as good a place as any to report that, when **Wolverine's** engagement was announced at the end of his mini-series last year, a group of Connecticut fans sent the happy couple an honest-to-god toaster. It was one thing when the death of **Phoenix** prompted flowers, but...a toaster? Everything was fine until **Logan** tried to dislodge a jammed piece of toast with one of his claws and, well...

AL MILGROM, ace editor on **Marvel Fanfare, Fantastic Four** and other titles, will be leaving his full-time position with Marvel within the next few months and going freelance for us. When you realize that Al pencils two full books a month (**Avengers** and **Peter Parker**), scripts **U.S. 1**, *and* has a smiling one-year-old daughter to boot, it's small wonder that something had to go. Al may be staying on as freelance editor for **Marvel Fanfare**, the popular direct-only title. Only time (and negotiations) will tell.

For those of you who wondered where **KA-ZAR #26** went for so long, here's the story: At Marvel we attempt to schedule our books in each of our four shipping weeks so that we have a roughly equal number of titles out each week. This causes less of a financial shock on our readers and our retailers. In preparing the photo-wraparound cover for the January-shipping **KA-ZAR #26**, we found we needed an extra two weeks to really get it just right (additional time for the more complex color separation, that sort of thing). Rather than stick it in the already-overloaded third-week shipping group, we pushed it back into the February 2nd group (that first week was lighter than usual due to cancellations and changes in frequency). Thus the delay, not to mention the May cover date on an issue that should have carried June on it (changing the cover date would have required yet *more* delays). In essence, **Ka-Zar** went bi-monthly one issue sooner than expected.

Still working to patch up those light first shipping weeks, we also moved RED SONJA **#1** from its March 15 ship date to April 5.

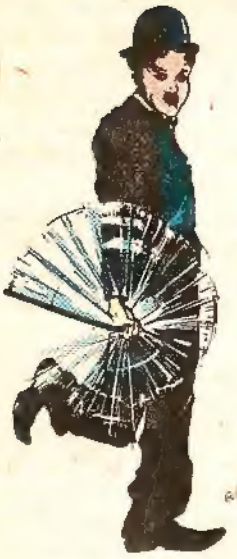
As for those of you who complain because **New Mutants** comes out the same week as **Teen Titans**, give us a break, huh?

Two new projects not in the previous issue's Coming Attractions have been scheduled: GRAPHIC NOVEL #7: KILLRAVEN; and ROCK AND RULE.

KILLRAVEN, Don McGregor's and Craig Russell's opus set in a "War of the Worlds" future earth, and which ran for a number of issues of AMAZING ADVENTURES some years back, was originally slated for EPIC ILLUSTRATED. But it was decided that the material warranted the Graphic Novel format, so it will feature an additional 14 pages of material to make it a 64 pages feast for the eyes.

ROCK AND RULE, mentioned in last issue's news column, is an adaptation of the animated film from Nelvana studios in Canada (the same folks slated to do ELFQUEST and, perhaps, the X-MEN). Telling the story of an aging rockstar who wants to obtain the aid of a demon in performing a truly spectacular farewell concert, this Marvel Superspecial will be done using blowups from actual cels of the film.

KILLRAVEN, shipping April 1, and ROCK AND RULE, shipping April 5, will be available in stores in mid-April, so watch for both of them!



BUTCH GUICE Gets Small

by Patrick Daniel O'Neill

Butch Guice, currently pencilling and inking Marvel's direct sales title Micronauts, *is a 21 year-old native of Chattanooga, Tennesse, who currently lives and works in Ashville, North Carolina, in the Smoky Mountains. A self-described "country boy at heart", Guice says he likes the mountains, where he can "get away and not have to deal with people and draw to my heart's content".*

BUTCH GUICE: My interest in art and comics came about the same time. I was about eleven years old and a friend of mine brought over some comic books. I'd never really displayed any interest in comics or art, and I hadn't read any comics up to that point. I looked at them, thought they were the greatest thing that God had created or something and decided then and there I wanted to be a comic book artist. I spent the next ten years banging it around, doing it in all my spare time, and eventually it paid off.

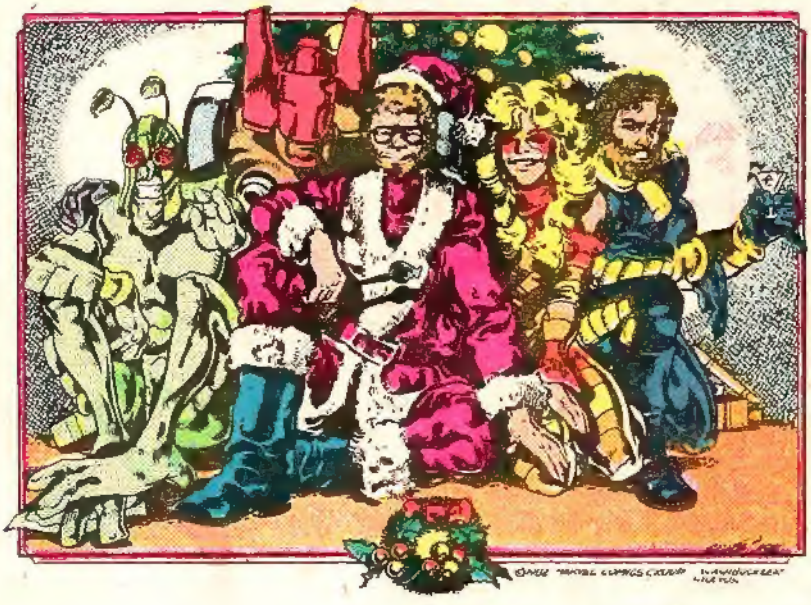
MARVEL AGE: When you were starting out, who were the artists you most admired? Who are your influences?

BG: At that time there was only one — it was Gene Colan's *Daredevil*. To me, every other comic paled beside that one for some reason. I got into it just as Colan was winding up his stay on the book, in the middle of the "Black Spectre" series, issue #100. Then somebody told me, "Y'know, he's been doing it for eight or ten years now".

MA: Did you run out and get the rest of them?

BG: Yeah, that was when I got into collecting comics as a hobby — collecting older issues. Colan influenced my art up until the time I got into comics. Then, through talking with other artists, and getting the "Jim Shooter Beginning Artist Talk," I found out that, while Gene could pull off a lot of these things, his style was not really the best thing to emulate if you were trying to do "comic-book stuff." He can do it... and no one else really can... because he's such a good artist. If everybody else could do what he does, you'd have a bunch of Gene Colan clones, instead of Neal Adams clones. He has a way of making his style work that other people don't. So I really had to sit back down and relearn a lot of basic simplicity.

So I went back to Marvel's roots, 1963-1968 — anything that Jack Kirby or Steve Ditko did. I really appreciate that kind of art a lot more that the more "glitzy" stuff that's on the scene right now. I find it more intriguing that Steve



Ditko could tell a story with nine panels per page for eight pages, and that it could be interesting visually... rather than drawing figures exploding out of the panel, just to get the readers' attention.

I did take a couple of art classes in high school, but most of it was just trial and error, doing it as a hobby and everything, until I lucked into the job at Marvel.

MA: How did you "luck into" the work at Marvel?

BG: In a strange, round-about fashion. I was invited as a fan guest to a convention here in North Carolina and Bob McLeod was the pro guest of honor. I showed him some of my artwork, just to get a critique, and he mentioned that he was late on an *Iron Man* inventory story — this was right before he picked up the *New Mutants* — and would I be interested in helping him finish off the story? There were about six pages left to be pencilled. I wholeheartedly agreed. Then he cleared it with Marvel and I finished it. It has yet to see print. And Bob and I would really rather it doesn't — it's not exactly our finest moment.

Then, apparently, Pat Broderick was over at Bob's house about the time my pencilled pages were coming in. Pat was over a year late on the *Rom* Annual... and Marvel was screaming because the writer, Bill Mantlo, wanted to be paid. He wanted the book finished and so Pat called me up and said "If I clear it with Marvel, will you help me with this story, too?" So I figured, "Maybe this is my niche in life — helping artists who are late on their deadlines". That was okayed and I ended up doing about the last sixteen pages. That was when Mantlo became associated with my work and he saw it for the first time.

When *Micronauts* came open, about five months later, Al Milgrom, who was editing it then, decided to catch up on deadlines by having three artists each pencilling a story at the same time. They decided to send one to Luke McDonnell, one to Mike Vosberg... and Bill walked into the office and said, "Why don't we send the third one to that Butch Guice guy who did the last half of the *Rom* Annual?" Milgrom okayed it and Mantlo called me up out of the blue and asked me if I wanted to draw an issue of *Micronauts*. Unfortunately, I got the third part of the three... so I had no references to the earlier two to go by. We muddled through it and then Bill and I wheeled and dealed and got me issue 49 out of it. They still weren't ready to commit the book to a totally unknown person. It was about the time of issue 50, after I'd done 48 and 49, that they found I could keep a regular schedule. I was working full time at the time in a design department. But then I was told I was the *Micronauts* regular penciller, and I've been doing it ever since.

Now that we're bi-monthly we're back on schedule, which makes everything a lot easier.

MA: An awful lot of people who are names in the field — Michael Golden, Howard Chaykin. Gil Kane — had done *Micronauts* in the past. Did you feel a little awkward... being this "total unknown" sitting down and following their work?

BG: It was really kind of strange. The only thing I felt I had going for me in terms of that, when I took it over, was at least I wasn't directly following Gil Kane, so it wouldn't be so much of a shock. "Oh look what they've got now — somebody we never heard of before. Throw him out."

Still, in my mind, I still have trouble making the connection that I'm drawing the same Micronauts that Mike Golden drew. When I think of the Micronauts, and I conjure up a mental image, I see Golden's version. He did such a tremendous first twelve issues, and I really don't think the book had lived up to its promise since those twelve issues. But, it looks like it's starting to turn back. Bill has written, for issues 53 and 54, what I think are probably the two best issues to come out since those twelve first twelve. We do sort of a Jack Kirby tribute. Since I started doing my own inking, I have total control over the artwork and I'm really enjoying that. Bill said he had a lot of fun writing it — more fun than he'd had in a long time writing *Micronauts*. I'm really hoping a lot of fans will get excited about it again and start following it again. It's starting to get that old flavor again, at least to me.

MA: Did you find yourself, when you first took it over, going back and looking at Golden's work and using it as a model for your own?

BG: Probably more subconsciously than anything else. I know with issue 48 I had a time figuring out everybody's costume — where all the nuts and bolts went — they had to do a lot of redrawing. I drew two-and-a-half issues of *Micronauts* and then, one day, Al Milgrom called up and said "Seven."

I said, "Seven what?"

He said, "Seven stripes."

"Seven stripes on what?"

He said, "Marionette has seven stripes on her arm, and her legs, and seven stripes on her costume. You've been driving the inker and the colorist crazy because you never keep a consistent number!"

I'd never stopped to count. I knew the color graduation and stuff... but still. There were just a lot of little things like that. It took a while to figure out everyone's costume and various little nuts and bolts. That was really thrown up to me when I first took over the book. Milgrom and Mantlo and several other people would shake their heads and say, "You've really got a winner this time, kid. The reason no artist likes to do *Micronauts* is because there's so much to put on everybody." When Mike designed them, he put in all the fine details of the toys they're based on. You're sort of obliged to include all these little articles and accessories.

But I would say when I first started out, at least when I was trying to mentally conjure up an image of each character, I would be thinking of Golden's characters more than anyone else's, really

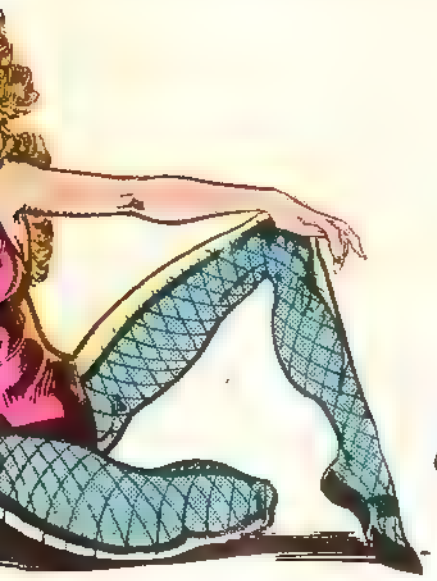
MA: Other than that mental image of Golden's original character designs, do you have an idea of who and what the Micronauts are?

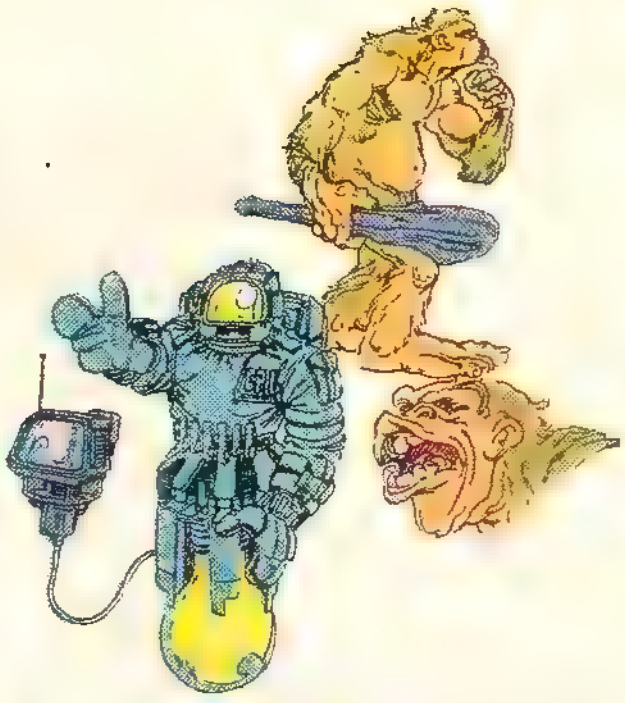
BG: Forget Commander Rann. I can't stand the character. I find him one of the most boring characters in comics today. I think Bill feels the same about him. If we had our way we'd probably just do him in.

I have favorite ones to draw. If I'm on a slack day or something, anytime I get to draw a scene with Bug, I really enjoy it. So on a day like that, instead of just pencilling in order, I'll take my thumbnail roughs and jump to a scene that has Bug in it. Doing that, I find I can produce double the amount of work, just because I'm enjoying it so much.

MA: What is it about Bug that interests you?

BG: I'm not really sure. He really didn't interest me until I started distorting his body. Originally, even when Golden did him, he was about six feet tall if you straightened him out... with these very long fins and everything. I found that, as I was drawing him, from issue 48 on, I was gradually shrinking him and his fins down, until he was about





five feet tall. The way I draw him now he's even shorter than Marionette. He's just a good visual character to play with because you can hang him off of anything. You can just draw this straight scene, and then stick this head in upside down somewhere in the panel. It makes a cute comic touch. Right now, I'm pushing Bill to develop a relationship between Bug and Marionette, since I don't like Commander Rann.

I haven't had much chance to draw Acroyear in armor, because the storyline hasn't allowed it. I think he was really Golden's strongpoint visually. I don't think anyone has really touched Golden's Acroyear in armor, since then.

In terms of their machinery and stuff, I'm starting to play with surprints for holograms and stuff. [Note: A surprint is a process by which a color shape is printed without a black outline.] I'm looking toward spicing up the Microverse. It's gotten kind of bland. Whenver you do a shot of Homeworld, it looks like a bunch of tinker-toys. In issue #55, Huntarr goes back to Homeworld, so that's where I'll unveil the new Homeworld. It'll have holograms, and glitzy little spaceships zipping around in the sky.

MA: How has doing your own inking changed your attitude toward your work?

BG: I like the "hindsight" that I have when I ink my own pencils. I pencil it, I mail it off, it's written and lettered, and it doesn't come back to me for three or four weeks. That gives me a fresh outlook on the pages. I can sit down and say "This isn't quite right. This needs something here or there." I can correct little things I didn't see the first time. It means I can play with light and shadow — a little bit of zip-a-tone work, surprints.

I'm trying to give the book a really distinctive look, apart from the average comic book. I want to incorporate the surprints, the zip-a-tone, into a final cohesive "*Micronauts* look". I'd like it to be like what Keith Giffen is doing with the Legion of Super-Heroes over at DC. You look at that book and it does look different, technically, from your average four-color comic. That's something I'm trying to give *Micronauts*.

Stories I'd Rather Not Write

by Roger Stern

Art by Stan Goldberg

A writer gets asked a lot a crazy questions, but no query is more frequently asked than this one:

"How do you come up with the ideas for your stories?"

Now, a question like that just cries out for a glib answer. In times past, I've been heard to say, "I write from life!" Or, "I leave a bowl of milk on the doorstep and the elves leave them!" Or, "When I'm asleep, my mind tunes in on other realities!"

The fact of the matter is that there are as many ways of coming up with ideas as there are stories.

There are *more* ways than there are stories. I know that for a fact, because there are a lot of stories which never get told.

Now I can hear you muttering to yourself, "Stories that don't get told? Why is that?"

Well, there are a lot of reasons. Some plot ideas simply become inoperative or invalid with the passage of time. Here's an example:

For years, Toro — the flaming sidekick of the original Human Torch — had been lacking an origin. All any one knew was that he was the survivor of a train wreck, that fire didn't hurt him, and that he'd gained the ability to flame on just by coming within close proximity of the Torch. Aside from that, his background was open to speculation. There were undoubtedly a number of readers who concocted their own explanations of who Toro was and how he got that way. I know I did. In my scenario, Toro and his parents were secret emissaries of the Inhumans, sent out into the work on a inspection trip. As I eventually became a writer for Marvel Comics, I might have done something with that idea . . . except for one thing. INVADERS #22 came along and presented the untold origin of Toro. (In case you missed that issue, it revealed that the kid was a mutant.) It was a reasonable enough origin, and it eliminated the need for me to go any further with my idea.

This is not to imply that existing stories are always inviolate. The supposed origin of Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch which appeared in GIANT SIZE AVENGERS #1 contradicted some ten-years worth of stories, and thus left itself open to invalidation. It remained for AVENGERS #185-187 to set the record straight. On the whole, however, it's a good idea to presume that stories happened the way they were originally presented.)

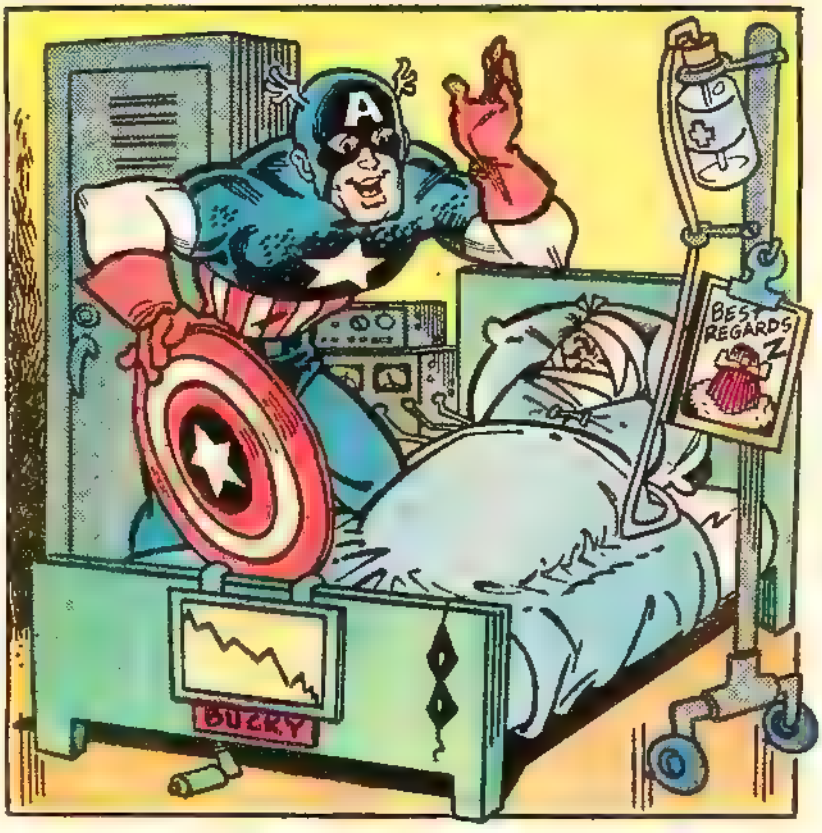
Okay, so some stories are lost to the ages through invalidation. Still other stories are never told because the creative personnel either change their minds or come up with something different in the process of putting the thing on paper.

And still other stories are never told because they would be stupid.

Those nightmare storylines — the real stinkers — most often pop into a writer's head on a rainy Monday morning, after he's been staring off into space for an hour or more. Many of the bad ideas which occasionally worm their way into my unwilling consciousness are concerned with overdone or overused gimmicks. (The

moment I find myself starting to think in terms of Spider-slayer robots or Sleepers, I push myself back from the desk and take a long walk to get that thought out of my system.)

Most of the yarns that I consign to my personal reject file deal with the return of dearly departed characters who should stay departed. For instance, when I was writing CAPTAIN AMERICA, I received a letter from someone who wanted me to bring back Cap's sidekick, Bucky. Suggestions like that always leave me a bit flummoxed as 1) I never liked kid sidekicks and 2) I can't for the life of me understand why anyone old enough to read *would* like kid sidekicks! Nevertheless, there was challenge inherent in the suggestion. Could a good Return-of-Bucky story be crafted? I had my doubts, but I tucked the problem away in the back of my mind to germinate and went on about my business. Weeks later, about midway through my morning shave, a scenario hit...



"IF THIS BE BUCKY — !"

Captain America is visiting a V.A. Hospital. It's Christmas, and as the Living Legend passes out holiday baskets and gives words of encouragement to the injured and disabled, he notices one poor old soul tucked away in the corner of one ward. This old guy is in really sorry shape... he's missing both arms and legs and a good portion of his face as well. A nurse tells Cap that he's Private John Doe... an amnesiac who had barely said a word since he was brought there at the end of World War Two. Cap goes over to talk to the old vet, trying to cheer him up. And, as Cap talks, a light seems to go on the Pvt. Doe's one good eye! He remembers who he is! "Cap! Cap, it's me... Bucky!"

At that point, I suddenly came fully awake, giving myself a quarter-inch gash on the underside of my chin with the razor. (Plotting *can* be dangerous work!) "If this be Bucky –!" I reasoned, just might be a little too moving. I didn't pursue the idea any further

On another occasion, shortly after I had started writing SPIDER-MAN, I started getting suggestions from an anonymous Wisconsin reader. Well, actually, I started getting the same suggestion over and over again. Using a score of different names and addresses, this unknown fan sent in a flood of mail requesting the return of the clone of Gwen Stacy (last seen in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #149). Of course, we weren't fooled. People who try to stack the fan mail always make certain mistakes which give themselves away, and this one was no exception. Moreover, there's a fairly strong concensus around the Bullpen that the Gwen-clone stories — which for all intents and purposes brought Gwen Stacy back from the dead — did not exactly count as Marvel's finest hour. Bringing back the clone would naturally make a bad mistake even worse.

And yet, an awful thought occurred to me... what if this crazed Wisconsinite were fabulously wealthy? What if he bought Marvel Comics and forced me to do something stupid, like bring back Gwen's clone? Before you could say, "Contractual Escape Clause," a story sprang to mind...

"THE CLONE'S STORY!"

Peter Parker receives a special delivery letter from somewhere on the West Coast. The letter is a thinly veiled plea for help, strangely worded and signed "Gwen." Verifying that the handwriting is indeed Gwen's, Pete travels to California, and discovers that the return address is that of a convent. No one at the convent knows anyone named Gwen. However, the convent has been the victim of a series of mysterious robberies. As Spider-Man, Pete hangs around the convent, solves the robbery mystery, and saves the day for the financially shakey convent. He's about to go on his way, when Sister Mary Elizabeth — a nun who appears to be in her early sixties — pulls him to one side to thank him... Sister Mary Elizabeth is Gwen's clone! The process by which the late Professor Warren had sped up the aging of the clone, to quickly bring her to adulthood, is still in effect! She has barely more than a year or so before she will die of old age! Pete is stunned, but Sister Mary Elizabeth is resigned to her fate. "When I began my life," she tells him, "when I discovered that I was not the true Gwen Stacy, I wasn't sure just what to do. And yet, I felt somehow chosen. For what, I did not know until I came here. This is where I belong now, Peter. Here, I have found peace."

Whew! Pretty weird, huh? Still,

there were parts of the story which seemed screamingly plausible. I mean, the clone did return from the dead in a manner of speaking — and if that isn't a religious experience, I don't know what is! I actually told most of this story to Tom DeFalco, my friendly neighborhood Spider-Man Editor. He reassured me, telling me that I'd never be forced to write a Clone story as long as he had something to say about it. Gratefully, I filed the story away, unused.

Don't think from this, though, that I'm opposed to "Return of" stories. After all, I'm the guy who brought back Baron Blood and Union Jack. Sure, I sent them on to their rewards eventually, but I did bring them back!

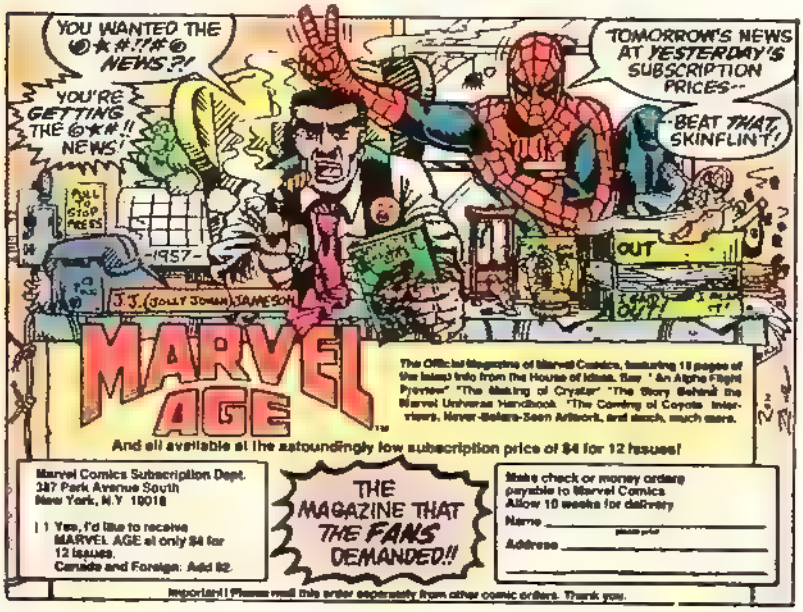
Nor should you get the impression that "Return of" stories are the only plot ideas lurking in my least-loved stories file. I also store unwanted cliches in the refuse heap. Case in point...

I was at a small convention in central New York shortly after the 1982 AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL went on sale. A number of convention-goers purchased copies... copies which I happily signed. Seated by a giant blow-up of Captain Marvel, I was talking to fans and listening as they told me how much they were looking forward to reading the new Captain's origin in the annual.

"She's from New Orleans, right? Is she into voodoo?"

I can't be sure, but I believe I started turning green. At any rate, the questioner took a few steps back, perhaps under the mistaken impression that I was Hulking out. Actually, it was nothing more than mild nausea, brought on by the thought that C.M.'s alter ego, Monica Rambeau, might be at all familiar with voodoo as anything other than a silly superstition. (If there was ever a worse 1970s comic-book cliche than that of the young black woman who's a voodoo priestess by night, it doesn't readily spring to mind.) I quickly took a couple of deep breaths and told the questioner that the only contact Monica ever had with chicken bones was when she picked up a carry-out lunch from Colonel Sanders.

But every once in a while, I wake up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat. I keep having this recurring nightmare; you see... Captain Marvel is dancing the mambo with Brother Voodoo... and the band is made up of Simon Garth, the Zombie, and his two partners: Uncle Ben and Sharon Carter! There's a story in there somewhere... but *I'll* never write it!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DREADSTAR and COYOTE

Comics of EPIC Proportions

by Peter Sanderson

Late last year readers saw the advent of the Epic Comics line, edited by the same team responsible for Marvel's anthology magazine *Epic Illustrated*, Archie Goodwin and his associate Jo Duffy.

The first of these bi-monthly high-quality-paper series was *Dreadstar*, written and drawn by Jim Starlin. The second series, which will shortly make its debut is *Coyote*, created and written by Steven Englehart, and rendered by Steve Leialoha.

IN THE BEGINNING

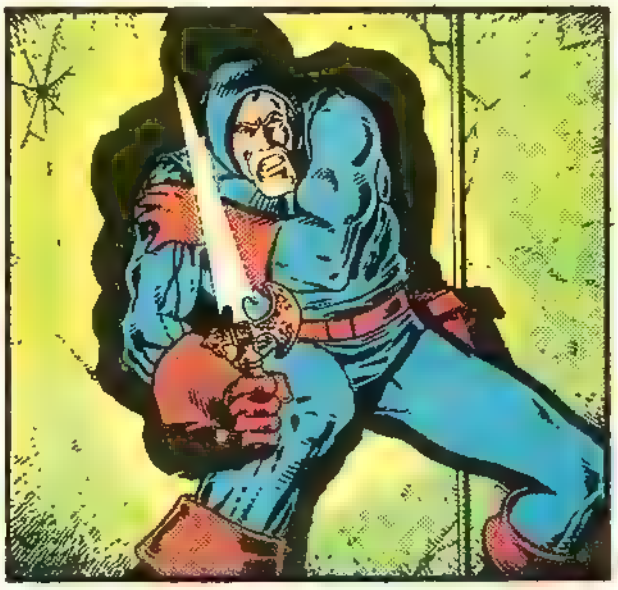
"They were trying to do something along the lines of *Heavy Metal*," recalls Jim Starlin about Dreadstar origins, "and what they wanted to buy were first-time publication rights and anthology rights. At this point neither I nor just about anyone else in the business had any knowledge about publishing law." Starlin did a serial entitled *Metamorphosis Odyssey*, which introduced the character Vanth Dreadstar, and debuted in *Epic Illustrated* #1.

Then, Starlin said Marvel editor-in-chief Jim Shooter "started talking about doing new projects along the lines of the graphic novels they did over in Europe. "So for about the next year and a half Marvel and I went back and forth on the contracts. During the time I learned everything I could about contract law and copyright law. We must have had ten different versions of the contract."

Eventually one was hammered out, stating, among other things, that Starlin retained ownership of the characters, just as do contributors to *Epic Illustrated*. Out of this came the Dreadstar Graphic novel and, after that project's success, reports Starlin, "the next step was to go on and do something along the lines of a regular series under the same author-ownership agreement. It took us about three months to get that contract all worked out." Originally, the idea was that there would be a monthly 32-page Baxter paper comic, part of which would consist of Starlin's *Dreadstar*. The other part would be Frank Miller's *Ronin*, but Miller eventually took his series to DC instead.

So now another feature was needed, and Starlin invited Steve Englehart to contribute one. Englehart had left Marvel in a dispute in 1976, and had misgivings, but he called up old friends there, and the reports I was getting were that Marvel was a lot better than it used to be, that the company had turned itself around," said Englehart. "They'd come right again. I came to New York last spring (1982) and talked to people face-to-face and found nothing to disabuse myself of the notion" that Marvel had changed for the better, "so we agreed in principle to do *Coyote*. Then we worked out a contract. I've got a deal now with Marvel which is the deal that I always said should exist."

Eventually it was decided that it would be less complicated legally to have only one creator-owned series per comic, and so *Dreadstar* and *Coyote* became two separate bi-monthly comics magazines. Marshall Rogers, the artist for *Coyote* during its Eclipse Magazine run, preferred to



concentrate solely on his other Eclipse work, so Englehart asked his fellow Californian Steve Leialoha to collaborate with him on it. Leialoha, who at this point wanted to move from doing Marvel-owned series like *Spider-Woman* into creator-owned material, agreed.

Epic Comics allows the creators to retain ownership of their creations, but then so do the various independent "alternative" comics companies which have arisen in recent years, such as Eclipse, First and Pacific. Why then would creators bring their projects to Epic rather than these others?

Archie Goodwin states that "Probably the biggest factor is that Marvel can give them larger distribution and a chance for bigger sales." Jim Starlin observes that "A lot of people out there who buy comic books don't believe a book is a comic unless it's Marvel or DC."

Starlin reveals that another factor is that Marvel will act as his agent in licensing out rights to *Dreadstar*. "I know nobody in Hollywood that I could take *Dreadstar* to and say, 'Hey, why don't you make a movie out of this?'" Starlin explains. "On the other hand, Marvel has Stan Lee out there in Hollywood doing that sort of thing, and *Dreadstar* will be in his portfolio that he's taking around now."

Finally, Goodwin remarks that "I think the fact that we're, in comics company terms, an old, established firm, is a big plus. We are, compared to alternative publishers, sort of an old reliable store. They know they can depend on us to be here, and to get the work done for them the best way possible."

EVIL VS. NOT-SO-EVIL

"Vanth Dreadstar's not a hero," Starlin points out. "He'd just as soon do his farming." But Dreadstar witnessed, and participated in, the destruction of the Milky Way Galaxy back in *Metamorphosis Odyssey* in order to save it from alien domination, and is determined to prevent the galaxy in which he now lives from falling into such a state that "the only choice you have is to put it out of its misery."

In the service of his goal of saving his galaxy, Vanth "is very amoral. He is a soldier in a war. Vanth does terrible things. He's killed people along the way. It's like all people. Sometimes we have to do things we don't particularly like doing, but we have to do them, because we know that it's going to do something that will be better for more people along the way."

Joining Vanth in his war against the Instrumentality are a number of other characters. Syzygy, "a mystic, rather arrogant, more educated than having common sense,"; Oedi, the group's conscience, who is "the most humanistic of all the characters," ironically enough since he is a humanoid cat; Willow who is "probably the most interesting character in the group. Hers is going to be a story of growing. She's probably the strongest character in the group in her own way. I don't want her to be an Amazon. At the same time I don't want her to be a victim of life."

The *Dreadstar* comic books are done with pen and ink, but the previous novels and stories in this series were done in paint. "I was going through a learning period at that point," says Starlin, "playing with shape and color and light. I know there's a lot of people out there who don't like the series at that time because of the techniques I was playing with. I can see why to a certain extent. I was losing some of the compositional values by restricting myself to paint. I did make things more static. I was working more with photos, which slowed the action up. I won't apologize for it. If I had a chance to do it over again, I'd do it the same way because I've learned a tremendous amount of technical stuff which has helped me with my drawings."

Issue 4 will introduce a new character, known simply as "Z". Starlin states that he will "look like a Darth Vader ripoff at first, but as he goes along it's going to be terribly apparent he's not." Issue 5 centers on Oedi's and Skeevo's attempts to rescue Syzygy from "a fate worse than death." Issue 6 introduces another new character, finally reaveals Plan M, which Starlin ominously describes as "the penultimate deceit which Vanth is committing for the good of the universe." Issue 6 will also have the premiere of an irregularly appearing backup strip, *The Intergalactic Toybox* by Berni Wrightson, which will be related to the *Dreadstar* series and which features as its protagonist one Aldo Gourtney, whom Starlin will describe only as "a genius in a bucket."

Dreadstar will not continue indefinitely. Starlin warns that running too long "is one of the traps that I feel a lot of comics have fallen into. There's just so much you can do before you become repetitive. Things in life do end; nothing lasts forever. I feel with *Dreadstar*, there should be a completion, as there was with *Warlock*." But Starlin foresees the series still being around five years from now. "I don't see it ending very quickly. I must have notes on twenty different stories at this point," each one of which would take up an issue, "and that's just filling in to about the halfway point."

COYOTE HOWLS AGAIN

Coyote began, Steve Englehart recalls, as "a different character called the Sage Elf that Al Weiss and I created in the Las Vegas desert way

back when. He was a guy who was raised in the desert by coyotes, but he was a much more whimsical character. That came from Al; whimsy's not really my specialty. Years later I was asked to do something dark and lurky and Batmanesque for Eclipse," Dean Mullaney's alternative comics company, for whom Englehart is now doing *Scorpio Rose*. "When I sat down to do it, whenever I thought of anything, I said, 'Well, I just did this,' in *Batman*, and I just flipped totally over into something very sunny, and this Sage Elf character came back. I stripped away the parts that were basically Al's and then took the parts that were mine and built them into Coyote."

Coyote is a youth no more than eighteen or nineteen years old, who was brought up in the desert by a "were-coyote" and his wife, who can change his appearance to resemble anyone, and who can shift into and travel through the "astral plane."

Coyote's stories center on the involvement of this being who was raised entirely outside society with civilization and the people he meets within it. The first of these stories was serialized in the first seven issues of *Eclipse* Magazine, the seventh having just gone on sale, and was penciled, inked, and toned by Englehart's collaborator on *Batman*, *Mister Miracle*, and *Scorpio Rose*, Marshall Rogers.

Englehart's characterization of Coyote is based on that of the coyote god of Indian myth, and, beyond that, on the concept of the trickster god, of whom the Coyote spirit is just one culture's example. The coyote god is more like a human being in personality than the American Indian's Great Spirit, or, as the first Epic issue points out, more like Loki (in his original conception as god of mischief) than like Thor. "If you read the legends on the coyote god," Englehart says, "generally he screws up. To me Coyote is the equivalent of Loki, but he's more like the Beast. He's funny; he thinks he's cleverer than he is. When he gets into the astral plane, he really starts thinking he's the greatest thing since sliced bread. Just in general, he's always telling himself how wonderful he is." But Coyote is not a fool and eventually will evolve out of his "simplistic" self-congratulatory attitude.

In the first Epic issue we meet Coyote's two new female acquaintances, the Gianetti sisters, Cassie and Natalia who Englehart sees as "different aspects of Coyote's personality. Cassie is the physical one, pretty uncomplicated, pretty straightforward. Natalia has got a few edges that are not immediately evident. What we know after the first issue is that she seems to pick up things that are uncomfortably close to the truth but were never said."

Englehart states that "The longer Coyote's around civilization, the more problems he's going to encounter between his primal urges to just do what he wants to do, and the constraints that civilization puts on him. Not in the sense that the law will keep him from doing thus and so, but just sort of the mindset that civilization imposes. If he pursues his relationships with the Gianetti sisters, they're going to expect things out of him that he's not really aware that he even owes them, because they're used to civilized men."

Coyote will also once again have to deal with the Shadow Cabinet a subversive organization out to overthrow the government of North America. The first Epic issue introduces two of its leaders: the sinister wizard known as the Monk, and Half-Dome, half of whose brain exists on the astral plane. "The Shadow Cabinet," Englehart says, "has sort of taken occultism and institutionalized it for a chosen few, and so their power runs beyond simple smoke-filled rooms. In very simple terms, these guys are evil. They know it. They have no problems with it. They're just out for personal power, and if that involves evil methods, that's just too bad."

Coyote is now a lighter, less solemn character, Englehart feels, than he was in the Eclipse series. In part this is because of the influence of the American Indian coyote myths Englehart has now read, especially in books the Steve Leialoha introduced him to. Englehart discovered to his surprise on reading them that "All of the stuff that I sort of intuited or even made up about coyotes in Indian legends" for the Eclipse series, "turned out to be absolutely true," such as the idea that Coyote would be able to alter his appearance.

"One of the reasons I like doing *Coyote*," says Steve Leialoha, "is that I can use several different artistic styles. I get bored if I do everything all in the same style."

In *Coyote*, Leialoha says, "I go from

I AM SYLVESTER SANTANGELO!
I'M PARIS. I MEAN FROM L.A.
HA HA HA! THEY THINK TO STEAL MY MIND... MINE, COYOTE'S!
IF ONLY THEY KNEW WHO IT IS THEY ATTACK! IF ONLY THEY KNEW HOW GREAT MY MIND IS!

I PLANNED ON THIS! I KNOW THE SHADOW CABINET! EVEN THESE LOW-LEVEL THUGS, THESE "BOUNCERS" WHO KNOW NOTHING OF THE COYOTE WHO HAUNTS THEIR LEADERS' DREAMS, WOULD HAVE TO BE FORMIDABLE!
BUT COYOTE IS MOST SLY!
...I WANT TO JOIN YOU GUYS. BE A SHADOW-

a realistic approach" in the present day sections of the story, "to a more cartoony and design-oriented children's book approach" for the sections recalling the American Indian myths of the coyote god. The stylized art of the latter sequences is quite remarkable, and is drawn from various sources. "The specific images are from Indian art," Leialoha says, but he also credits as influences children's books of the 1920s and the work of *Pogo*'s Walt Kelly. The visualization of the initial myth section in the first issue, with the Great Spirit in the heavens, Leialoha says, "I just made up, trying to get a universal Great Spirit concept" rather than using an image from a specific Indian tribe. Once the coyote god comes to Earth, Leialoha begins drawing on Northwest Indian art. The myth sequences, he says, tend to be somewhat "flowery" at the beginning, "but as we get closer to present times, it tends to get slightly more realistic. It's almost like a merg-

ing of styles the closer you get to the present."

On the other hand, the sequences involving the sinister Shadow Cabinet, Leialoha states, are all sort of a stylistic approach to doing the layouts, in which I do Art Deco composition." The striking design of the villainous Monk is also influenced by that style. "What Englehart wanted with that character was a Cardinal Richelieu kind of guy: dark and ominous and manipulative. What I came up with is a combination of various kinds of Art Deco statues from the 1920s that I have pictures of and a variation of an unused costume designed (by Syd Mead) for *Tron*."

Much of the Eclipse *Coyote* series had what Englehart characterizes as Marshall Rogers' "dark and lurky" style. Leialoha says that he himself is aiming to present more of a visual contrast between "the bright, open spaces" where Coyote, "a creature of the desert," is in his element, and "the Shadow Cabinet, which, rightfully so, is full of shadows." Englehart, who praises the work of both Rogers and Leialoha on *Coyote*, thinks that Leialoha's style suits the new, lighter side of the character more than Roger's. Leialoha characterizes Coyote as "basically a wise guy," and though Coyote can make himself look like anyone, "there are times when the personality comes through regardless of what he's looking like at the moment."

LIFE WITHOUT THE CODE

Epic Comics do not carry the Comics Code of Authority seal. What will this mean in practice in terms of the visual and thematic content of the comics? *Coyote's* first issue contains some language that the Code would not approve, and the second issue of *Dreadstar* dealt with a sexual situation that it would surely have found impermissible had Starlin made it any more explicit. But, significantly, Starlin points out that he wrote that sequence "in such a way that it wouldn't get in any trouble with the Code" even though the comic was not to be submitted to the Code Authority, and Steve Englehart says that he does not want to have to put a "For Mature Audiences Only" blurb on *Coyote's* covers.

Archie Goodwin says that he has discussed the subject with the Epic Comics creators, and that they have "generally agreed that we wouldn't do more than you'd see in an R-rated movie." *Coyote*, because of the title character's personality, "is a little racy and has slight nudity and things like that that you don't see in *Dreadstar*, because Jim hasn't reached a point in any particular story he's telling where he felt it was necessary. I suppose he might do it if he felt it was necessary. As in *Epic Illustrated*, we don't want to go overboard with it; we want to show a certain amount of restraint."

"Now that *Coyote* has moved into the Epic Comics format," says Englehart, "so that it will be four-color, the same size as the other comic books, and sold right next to *Daredevil* and the *FF* and so forth, there are differences. I object to the idea in principle that comics are a children's medium, that they have to stay within bounds for a twelve-year-old in order to exist." But, "Because four-color comics are defined in American reality as something that children have access to, I feel like pulling back a little bit."

Starlin's opinion is that the fact that Epic Comics are free of Code restrictions is less important than the fact that they are sold only through direct sales outlets. As a result, he says, 'the readership is a more discriminating lot" overall than a newsstand comic would have. "These readers will be willing — will be overjoyed — to get a more complicated story than you would get in something that you'd sell in a drugstore. The direct sales market has the kind of readership that would be more likely to follow *Dreadstar*."

SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Goodwin hopes that eventually any and all genres of comics will be represented in the Epic Comics line. "I think the important thing is execution, not genre. With Epic Comics it'll be very important who's doing it, and what kind of approach they bring to the material. If they can bring a unique individual vision to it, then I think regardless of the genre, it will probably succeed."

The initial *Coyote* and *Dreadstar* contracts are for only six bi-monthly issues (and a graphic novel) for each, but if the magazines do well and everyone is agreeable, another six issues will be contracted for each, and another after that. "The main idea with having Epic Comics group was to create characters that would have continuing, ongoing adventures," says Goodwin. The line will expand, and, he projects, "by the end of next year (1983), if they keep doing well, as I expect they will, I'd think we'd get up to around six titles. It's probably inevitable that one or two of them may not make it, but as we go along, we'll probably keep adding."

Coyote and *Dreadstar*, then, are just the beginning of a growing subdivision of Marvel Comics, and these two series should be around for a long time. Goodwin says that "We didn't talk about doing *Dreadstar* or *Coyote* as just a six-issue series. We hoped that they would go on forever. Long may we enjoy and profit from them."

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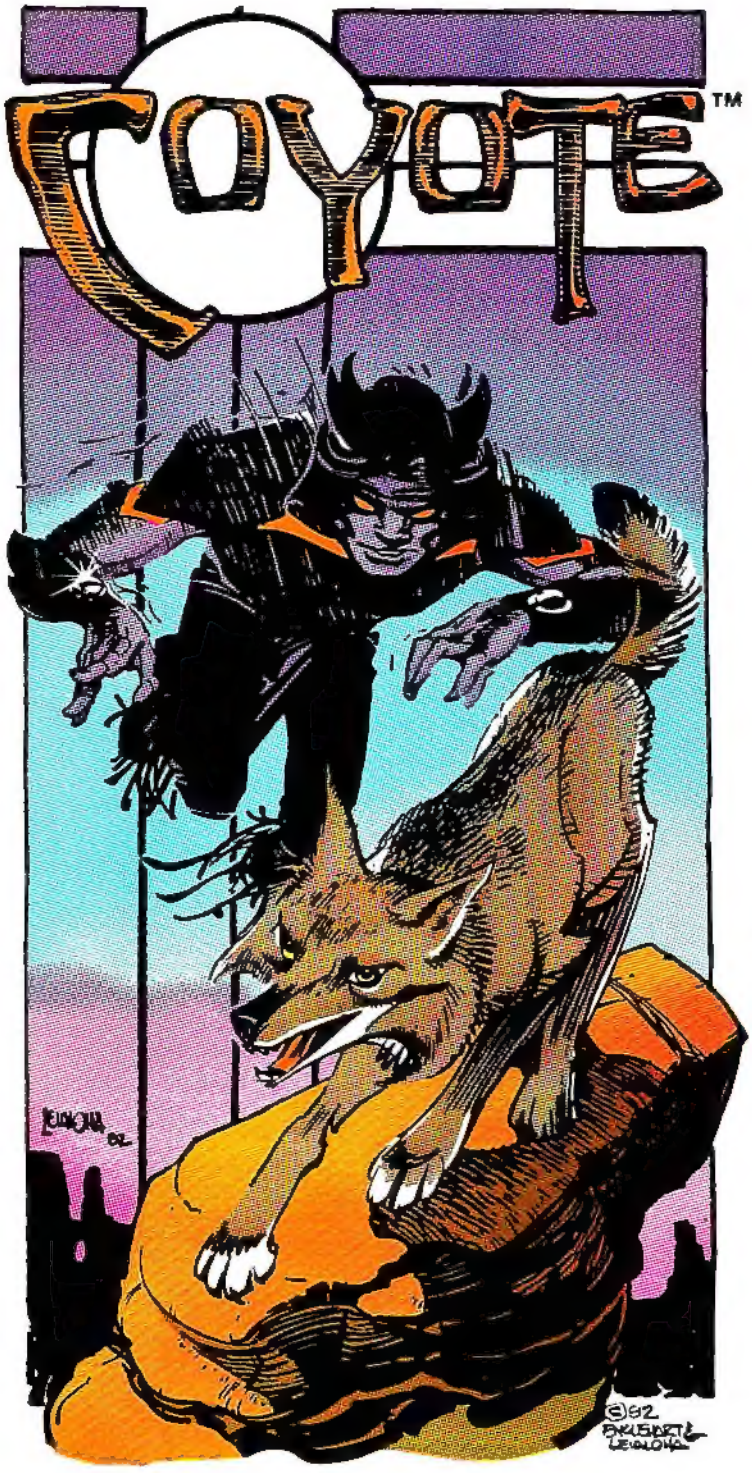

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